



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

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Part	Section	Subject	Policy No.	Review Date
Institutional Operations	Safety and Emergency Procedures	Earthquake Response Plan	3.2.9	
Reference	ACA Standard 3-ALDF-3B-14 Threats to Security such as Riots and Hostage Situations			
Consent Decree	Paragraph 54 Develop Facility Policies and Procedure			

I. PURPOSE

To describe general response procedures to correctional staff of the Department of Corrections in the event of an earthquake.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the Department of Corrections to provide correctional staff with an earthquake response plan that enables them to respond effectively and safely without jeopardizing the safety of the staff, inmates and the public.

III. PROCEDURES

A. An earthquake is a sudden, rapid shaking of the Earth caused by the breaking and shifting of rock beneath the Earth's surface. Ground shaking from earthquakes can collapse buildings; disrupt electricity and telephone services; and sometimes trigger landslides, fires, and destructive ocean waves (tsunamis). When an earthquake occurs in populated areas, it may cause deaths, injuries, and extensive property damage. Earthquakes have occurred in the past and they will happen again.

Aftershocks are smaller earthquakes that follow the main shock and can cause further damage to weakened buildings. Aftershocks can occur in the first few hours, days, weeks, or even months after the quake. Some earthquakes are actually foreshocks, and a larger earthquake might occur.

Ground movement during an earthquake is rarely the direct cause of death or injury. Most earthquake related injuries result from collapsing walls, flying glass, and falling objects because of the ground shaking.

B. What To Do During an Earthquake

In the event of an earthquake, the following precautions should be taken:

1. Stay calm. The Shift Commander and/or Assistant Shift Supervisor will inform all housing unit officers to calm down all the inmates/detainees and to stay where they are. Inmates/detainees will be evacuated only if the housing unit is unsafe.
2. If outside, get away from buildings and utility wires. Find a clear spot, drop to the ground and stay until the shaking stops.
3. If indoors, get under sturdy furniture or a doorway, and away from windows. Stay indoors until the shaking stops and you're safe to exit.
4. Use the telephone only for emergencies, as unnecessary calls tie up the lines.
5. Prepare for aftershocks.
6. Stay away from exposed electrical wires.
7. Do not enter damaged buildings.
8. If inside a vehicle, pull over to a clear location and stop the car. Stay inside the car with your seatbelt fastened until the shaking stops.

C. What To Do After an Earthquake

1. Check yourself for injuries. After taking care of you, help injured or trapped persons. Give first aid when appropriate. Do not try to move seriously injured people unless they are in immediate danger of further injury.
2. Protect yourself from further danger by putting on long pants, long-sleeved shirt, sturdy shoes and work gloves. Proper clothing will protect you from further injury from broken objects.
3. Look for and extinguish small fires. Call the Fire Division if necessary. Eliminate fire hazards.
4. Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline or other flammable liquids.
5. Open closet and cabinet doors cautiously. Contents may have shifted during the earthquake and could fall, creating further damage or injury.
6. Inspect the building for damage. Evacuate everyone if the building is unsafe. When evacuating, assist elderly and disable people first. Aftershocks can cause further damage to unstable buildings.
7. Listen for emergency information and instructions from the Shift Commander and/or Assistant Shift Commander.

8. Stay out of damaged buildings until it is determined that it is safe to enter by the proper authorities.
9. Look for electrical system damage.
10. Check for sewage and water line damage.
11. Watch for loose plaster, drywall, and ceilings that could fall.
12. Examine walls, floors, doors, staircases and windows to make sure that the building is not in danger of collapsing.
13. If possible, take photographs of the damages both to the buildings and its contents.

D. Inmate Evacuation

1. The Shift Commander and/or Assistant Shift Commander will make a decision based on the damage assessment of the building whether or not the building will be immediately evacuated. The Shift Commander and/or Assistant Shift Commander may authorize evacuation of a housing unit to another housing unit in the event of a life-threatening emergency in the immediate area. Prior to evacuation, the Shift Commander and/or Assistant Shift Commander will ensure that sufficient personnel are available to properly supervise inmates/detainees. During evacuation, inmates/detainees do not take any personal belongings with them, unless told to do so. Inmates/detainees with special needs will be given priority in an evacuation. Once all persons have evacuated into another housing unit, the officer counts all inmates/detainee under his/her supervision. If any are missing, the officer will return to the evacuated area to search for them, if it is safe to do so. Inmates/detainees who are under protective custody and inmates/detainees who are considered security risk will be separated from the other inmates/detainees. Inmates/detainees will not be returned to the building until it has been determined that it is safe to do so. Because the possibility of escape increases when evacuation is necessary, the Shift Commander and/or Assistance Shift Commander will assign officers to maintain perimeter security and lockdown on all housing units not damaged by the earthquake. The Commissioner of Corrections, Director of Administration, Director of Corrections, Deputy Director of Corrections, and the Captain of Operations will be notified when evacuation outside the facility is necessary.

E. Damage Assessment

1. Soon after the earthquake and the inmates/detainees are safe and secured, injuries are attended to; the Shift Commander and/or Assistant Shift Commander will initiate damage assessment. The Shift Commander or his/her designee will form

a damage assessment team that will inspect the following and a report submitted to the Captain of Operations and the Director of Corrections as soon as possible:

1. Buildings.
2. Water and sewer lines.
3. Electrical and telephone systems.
4. Air condition systems in all buildings.
5. Perimeter fencing.
6. Toilets and showers in all buildings.
7. Office equipment, vehicles and furniture.
8. Names of persons injured and the types of injuries.
9. Back-up generator.

The Captain of Operations will review the Damage Assessment Report and will address breach of security and safety concerns as soon as possible. The Captain of Operations will submit a report to the Commissioner of Corrections and copies to the Director of Administration, Director of Corrections, and Deputy Director of Corrections as to actions taken to rectify immediate security and safety concerns and other recommendations to make the facility return to normal operation.

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